

**Statement by Minister Counsellor Yongsoo Lee  
Of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea  
4th formal meeting of SDGs Open Working Group  
Tuesday, 18 June 2013, New York**

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Mr. Co-Chair,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Co-Chairs for convening the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SDGs OWG. I would also like to thank the Technical Support Team for providing the issue briefs, which continue to serve as a valuable source for our ongoing discussions.

Employment is not only important for achieving poverty eradication and economic and social development, but also for maintaining a person's basic dignity. A decent job is a source of stable income and sense of belongingness. It is also a foundation for social stability and economic prosperity.

Despite increasing progress in the quality of life over the past decades, the majority of workers in the developing world remain trapped in vulnerable, often informal jobs with low incomes. Furthermore, over 60 percent of young people in developing countries are unemployed or engaged in irregular and low wage jobs. With this in mind, my delegation would like to make the following suggestions.

First, we need to transform our economy into a low-carbon green economy in order to create decent jobs in a sustainable manner. According to an ILO report, continuing a business-as-usual development model would result in a productivity decline of 2.4% by 2030 and 7.2% by 2050. Additionally, maintaining current patterns of consumption and production is destined to incur grave socioeconomic costs, such as serious water and energy shortages, as well as poverty, inequality, and food insecurity.

There are various avenues for creating "green jobs," such as through renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. Transition to a green economy may, however, result in job losses in the traditional industries. As such, the transition should be accompanied by social protection policies focused on the affected parts of the society as well as the most vulnerable, including low wage workers.

Second, employment and decent work should be built-in as a stand-alone goal encompassing targets for priority areas relating to economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

Third, we must focus on youth and women. Targets focused on increasing employment opportunities for youth and women, as well as on ensuring a variety of vocational training opportunities need to be included in the SDGs.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Education is a basic human right, and the basis of sustainable development. Education contributes to the generation of larger economic income, development of individuals and societies, maintenance of public health, creation of decent work, and achievement of gender equality.

The past 10 years of international efforts to achieve the MDGs have brought tremendous success; however, many people still lack access to quality education. As such, education must be appropriately reflected in the SDGs and the goal on education must extend beyond the quantitative aspects, such as accessibility to primary education or the duration of study, and focus on qualitative aspects, such as improving the accessibility and completion of secondary education, vocational training, and continuing education, as well as ensuring minimum learning standards. Additionally, any specific goals should give special consideration to the vulnerable social groups so as to address ongoing and prohibitive gender and age-based inequalities.

In our consideration of the future SDGs on education, we should build upon various programs and initiatives already underway in the international community. In particular, the Korean delegation supports the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative and its specific goals and targets. We propose to establish specific goals and targets on education with clear deadlines, as well as introduce related targets under other goals that have critical points of convergence with education.

Culture is an important element of achieving sustainable development. Strengthening the cultural fabric of communities provides the basis for social and economic development while promoting values like diversity, equality, and national identity in conflict and post-conflict societies. Culture and the creative industries also have huge economic potential and can contribute to sustainable development.

As culture varies from country to country, we will need to take its unique nature into consideration and determine whether to create a specific SDG on culture, or to create related but specific targets under other SDGs.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Let me conclude by offering my delegation's high praise for the Co-Chairs' able leadership and sustained efforts in guiding this SDGs OWG process. We will continue to participate constructively in our ongoing efforts to address employment and decent work. Thank you.